

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Eastern District of North Carolina

DEC 19 2022

PETER A. MOORE, JR., CLERK
US DISTRICT COURT, EDNC
BY CP DEP CLKUnited States of America
v.
Christopher Steven Lancaster

Case No. 5:22-mj-2192-RN

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of July 2022 to December 2022 in the county of Cumberland in the
Eastern District of NC and elsewhere, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 U.S.C. § 115(a)(1)(B)

Offense Description

The defendant did threaten to assault and murder employees of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, with the intent to intimidate those employees while engaged in the performance of their official duties, and retaliate against those employees on account of the performance of their official duties, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 115(a)(1)(B).

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

Please see attached affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.Shaun McNerney
Complainant's signatureOn this day, Officer Shaun McNerney appeared before me
via reliable electronic means, was placed under oath,
and attested to the contents of this Complaint.Shaun McNerney, Veterans Affairs Police Officer
Printed name and titleDate: 12/19/2022Robert T. Numbers II
Judge's signatureCity and state: Raleigh, North CarolinaROBERT T. NUMBERS, II, U.S. Magistrate Judge
Printed name and title

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA**

AFFIDAVIT

1. I, Shaun McNerney, having been duly sworn, do hereby depose and state: I am a Police Officer with the Department of Veterans Affairs Police Department (VAPD). I have been so employed since August 2020. I currently work for the Fayetteville, North Carolina Department of Veterans Affairs, Coastal Clinics. Prior to my employment with the VAPD, and starting in 2016, I was a Probation & Parole Officer with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, where I supervised and investigated Probationers, Parolees, and Post-Release cases in the County of Onslow. From 2014 to 2016, I was a Detention Officer with the Onslow County Sheriff's Office. From 2010 to 2014, I was a Police Officer for the Camp Lejeune Provost Marshals Office, and prior to that, I served on active duty with the U.S. Marine Corps.

2. I have been trained by several agencies in the preparation, presentation, and service of criminal complaints, arrest, and search warrants, and have been involved in the investigation of numerous types of offenses at various levels of the Government: County, State, and Federal.

3. I submit this Affidavit in support of a Criminal Complaint against Christopher Steven Lancaster (hereinafter "LANCASTER"). As set forth in this Affidavit, there is probable cause that LANCASTER has violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 115(a)(1)(B) (Threatening a Federal Official).

4. Title 18, United States Code, Section 115(a)(1)(B) provides that "[w]henever threatens to assault, kidnap, or murder, a United States official ... with

intent to impede, intimidate, or interfere with such official ... while engaged in the performance of official duties, or with intent to retaliate against such official ... on account of the performance of official duties, [shall be guilty of a crime].”

5. The facts set forth below are based upon my personal observations, reports and information provided to me by other law enforcement officials, statements and recordings obtained by the VAPD. This affidavit is intended to show that there is probable cause for the issuance of a Complaint and does not purport to set forth all my knowledge of or investigation into this matter.

A SERIES OF THREATENING CALLS

6. In or about October 2019, LANCASTER began making harassing and threatening phone calls to the Fayetteville VA Medical Center staff. These phone calls occurring weekly, ranging in number from approximately one to reportedly one hundred and forty-nine phone calls a day. The harassment is aimed at any employee who answers the telephone, and they are spread throughout many of the clinics and hospitals under the Fayetteville VA Medical Center facilities located in Jacksonville, Wilmington, Raeford, and Fayetteville. LANCASTER will call at all hours of day and night, speaking with Medical Support Assistants (MSA), Nursing Staff, Social Workers, and Providers, using profanity, racial epithets, wishing they would be diagnosed with cancer, stating they would be beheaded, calling for harm to befall the staff member's child(ren), and boasting a fictitious military career.

7. LANCASTER consistently calls from the same telephone number, (910) 264-5541, which depicts the name “Lancaster” on the telephone identification screen.

LANCASTER is also identified through repeating his full name, social security number, phone number, and date of birth on voicemails he has left on clinical staffs' telephones. All callers to VA phone systems are required to identify themselves by name and social security.

8. These harassing phone calls have been an ongoing occurrence for over two years. LANCASTER has failed to report for medical appointments, stating he believed he would be served with charges for his threatening phone calls. Attempts by local law enforcement to locate LANCASTER via the residential addresses he provided to the VA have proven unsuccessful. It was determined he was evicted and/or trespassed from hotels he temporarily resided in. LANCASTER's recent harassment has encompassed the Beckley, West Virginia VA Medical Center and Veterans Crisis Line. The VA Medical Center in Beckley, West Virginia, takes overflow calls after hours to assist the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. LANCASTER has been calling them and reportedly being disorderly to their staff, while complaining about a lack of service from the Fayetteville VA Medical Center.

INVESTIGATION OF LANCASTER

9. On at least the following dates, VAPD Officers received complaints regarding LANCASTER's threatening and harassing phone calls: January 21, 2020; April 1, 2020; Oct 11, 2020; December 9, 2021; January 13, 2022; May 27, 2022; July 5, 2022; July 8, 2022; July 10, 2022; July 11, 2022; July 22, 2022; August 8, 2022; August 10, 2022; August 14, 2022; December 8, 2022; December 14, 2022; and December 15, 2022. During the investigation, it was determined clinical staff were not reporting

every harassing phone call to the authorities. In recent months, LANCASTER has placed in excess of 180 phone calls to VA medical centers and their support staff, not including the direct extension phone calls. One Registered Nurse (RN) M.M. (Nurse M.M.) reported having forty-five minutes of saved voicemails, with such statements as, "if the US respected Sharia Law, I would cut your head off and display it." Nurse M.M. further reported that LANCASTER recently invited her to the Cape Fear River in Wilmington so he could watch her drown.

10. On July 15, 2022, VA Police spoke with Dr. R.T. (Dr. R.T.) via telephone. Dr. R.T. is the Chief of Primary Care for all Coastal Clinics under the Fayetteville VA Medical Center. I asked him to state the nature of his relationship and explain his involvement with LANCASTER. Dr. R.T. said he is the Chief of Primary Care, so when LANCASTER would become disorderly during his appointments or demand to see the "boss," Dr. R.T. would intervene in the attempts to deescalate the situation. Dr. R.T. continued to say he receives approximately four to five phone calls a day from LANCASTER, to include nights and weekends on his office landline, and LANCASTER will leave so many profanity-laced messages that they fill his voicemail box. He recently deleted seventeen voicemails just to make room. VA Police asked if he was aware of any direct threats made to him, and he said the threats he was concerned with were the ones directed at his wife and children. Dr. R.T. is confident LANCASTER knows where he lives, saying, "he's not stupid." When I asked him to clarify these threats, Dr. R.T. stated LANCASTER has said that he wished he "could enact Sharia

Law” and Dr. R.T.’s “hands should be cut off.” He wished for Dr. R.T.’s wife and kids to be “drowned or to die in a car crash.”

11. On July 15, 2022, VA Police spoke with Physician Assistant (PA) T.M. (PA T.M.) via telephone. PA T.M. informed VA Police that he is LANCASTER’s Primary Care Provider and has been since April 2020. LANCASTER has reportedly been hostile towards to the VA staff since the beginning of his care. Once, in the presence of PA T.M., LANCASTER was dealing with a Veterans Benefits coordinator and made a verbal threat against the coordinator’s children. VA Police inquired about any other specific threats by LANCASTER that PA T.M. may have witnessed. He stated the notes for LANCASTER in the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS) would have over “four reams of paper” if printed.

RECENT ESCALATION

12. On December 8, 2022, the Veterans Crisis Line (VCL), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, received a phone call from a homicidal and suicidal individual. The caller identified himself by name (as “Lancaster”) and the last four numbers of his social security number, which matched LANCASTER’s. The call was answered by Veterans Crisis Line Specialist M.B. and lasted several minutes. Consistent with his prior calls, LANCASTER was verbally aggressive, stating he was going to “blow his head off in four hours.” LANCASTER continued to say he had a 9mm handgun, declaring, “I am going to kill 40 people at the Jacksonville, NC ER because they were unable to help me,” referring to the Jacksonville VA’s Medical Clinic. Several hours after his initial threat against the Jacksonville VA, LANCASTER called the VA’s

Wilmington Health Care Clinic (WHCC), leaving a voicemail with the nursing staff stating, "I'm going to blow my brains out and there is nothing you can do about it."

13. On that date, VAPD Officer Joshua Swindell was able to contact LANCASTER via telephone. Several attempts to get LANCASTER to give up his location were unsuccessful. LANCASTER responded to these attempts by saying, "You all will not kill me. You already killed me twice. I will kill myself when I feel like it," and he terminated the call. Later in the afternoon of December 8, 2022, LANCASTER contacted the Jacksonville VA, speaking with Advanced Medical Support Assistant (AMSA) S.K. (AMSA S.K.). LANCASTER told AMSA S.K. that he was suicidal and the VA "would be sorry"; however, he repeatedly refused to give an address for first responders. LANCASTER stated that federal law enforcement was after him, so he did not want to share his location. While speaking with AMSA S.K., LANCASTER made a reference to "death by cop." After multiple attempts to retrieve an address and several offers of assistance, LANCASTER started to use profanity towards to the staff and AMSA S.K. ended the phone call.

14. On December 16, 2022, I was notified VA Police in Beckley, West Virginia, received another complaint regarding LANCASTER. I telephoned Officer Powell of the Beckley, West Virginia VA Police who informed me he received a complaint from RN S.S. (Nurse S.S.). Nurse S.S. answered a phone call from LANCASTER. During the call, LANCASTER inquired about the Nurse S.S.'s location, saying if she was in Beckley, he would "have his brother blow her fucking brains out, bitch." LANCASTER

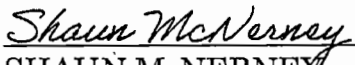
then ended the phone call only to call back immediately and say, "I will blow your fucking brains out."

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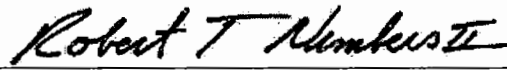
CONCLUSION

15. Based upon the above information, there is probable cause to believe that LANCASTER has violated Title 18, United States Code, Section 115(a)(1)(B).

Further your Affiant sayeth not.


SHAUN McNERNEY
Police Officer
Department of Veterans Affairs, Police

Pursuant to Rule 4.1 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, the affiant appeared before me via reliable electronic means, was placed under oath, and attested to the contents of this written affidavit.
Dated: December 19, 2022


Robert T. Numbers, II
United States Magistrate Judge